

Remarks:

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the non-final Office action dated November 1, 2006, and are being filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111. Claims 1-10 and 13-25 are pending in the application. In the Office action, the Examiner (1) objected to claim 16, while indicating its allowability if rewritten, (2) rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, and (3) rejected claims 1-10, 13-15, and 17-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over a combination of references.

Applicants traverse the rejections, contending that each of the pending claims is definite and is patentable over the cited references. Nevertheless, to expedite issuance of a patent, and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim aspects of the invention that applicants want to patent now, applicants have canceled claims 15 and 16, without prejudice, and has amended each of the independent claims, namely, claims 1, 7, 13, 21, and 24. However, applicants reserve the right to pursue any of the canceled or amended claims, in original or previously presented form, at a later time. Furthermore, applicants have presented remarks showing that each of the pending claims is patentable over the cited references. Accordingly, in view of the amendments above and the remarks below, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability covering all of the pending claims.

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I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner asserted that the term "a bent configuration" is vague. Applicants disagree. Nevertheless, for the reasons stated above, applicants have amended claim 1 to replace the term "bent configuration" with a distinct description. Support for this amendment to claim 1 is included in the application as filed, for example, in Figures 4 and 5 and on page 7, lines 11-17. This amendment to claim 1 should fully address the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-6 under Section 112 and thus the rejections should be removed.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected each of the pending claims, except claim 16, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over a combination of two or more references. Claims 1-5, 21-23, and 25 were rejected over U.S. Patent No. 3,981,496 to Jensen et al. ("Jensen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,779,790 to Kitahara ("Kitahara"); claims 6-10 were rejected over Jensen in view of Kitahara and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,681,312 to Harvey ("Harvey"); and claims 13-15, 17-20, and 24 were rejected over Harvey in view of Japanese Patent No. 01261161 to Izumi ("Izumi"). Applicants traverse the rejections. Nevertheless, for the reasons set forth above, applicants have amended each of independent claims 1, 7, 13, 21, and 24. Each of these independent claims and their dependent claims are patentable at least for the reasons set forth below.

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A. Claims 1-6

Independent claim 1, as amended, is directed to a method of processing sheet media:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of processing sheet media, comprising:

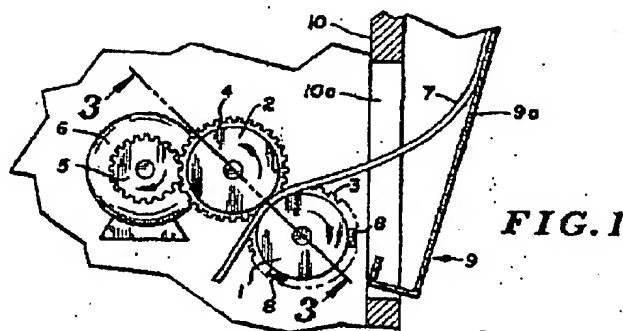
moving a sheet medium upward by contact of a face of the sheet medium with a roller rotating about an axis of rotation; and

carrying a trailing edge of the sheet medium upward and then over the roller with a member ~~that has a bent configuration~~,

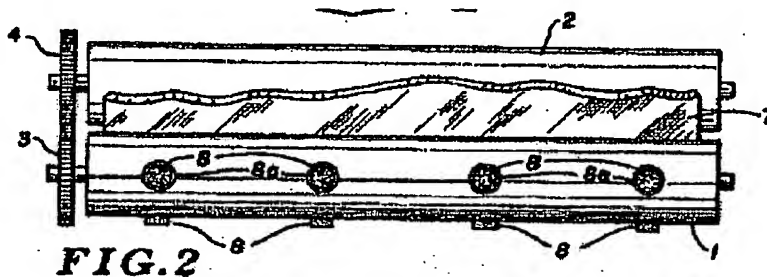
wherein the member is connected to the roller such that the member completely orbits the axis of rotation along a circular path, wherein the member has a distal tip that is spaced farthest from the axis of rotation, and wherein the member extends away from the axis of rotation to the distal tip along a nonlinear path.

Claim 1 was rejected over Jensen and Kitahara. However, neither of these references, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests every element of amended claim 1. For example, neither reference teaches or suggests a member that completely orbits the axis of rotation along a circular path, that carries a trailing edge of a sheet medium upward and then over a roller, and that "extends away from the axis of rotation [of the roller] to the distal tip along a nonlinear path."

Jensen relates to a roller assembly for sheet film processors. Figure 1 of Jensen, which is reproduced here to facilitate review, illustrates an example of the roller assembly.

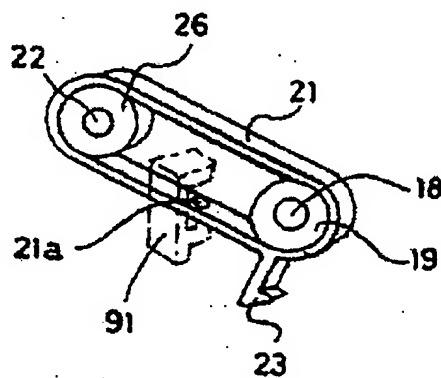


The assembly has a pair of rollers 1 and 2 positioned to receive and advance a sheet of film 7. Roller 1 has a plurality of soft compressible elements 8 that are circumferentially spaced about the roller. Elements 8 extend from recesses 8a of roller 1, as depicted by Figure 2 of Jensen, which is reproduced here to facilitate review.



Elements 8 are disclosed to be cylindrical and thus no element 8 "extends away from the axis of rotation to the distal tip along a nonlinear path," as recited by claim 1.

Kitahara relates to a sheet processing apparatus. Figure 3 of Kitahara, which is reproduced here to facilitate review, illustrates a conveyance belt assembly of the sheet processing apparatus. The assembly includes a pair of pulleys, 19 and 26, and a conveyance belt 21 extending around both pulleys. An outer periphery of the belt has a pushing pawl 23 that travels along an oval path defined by travel of the belt around both pulleys.



In the Office action, the Examiner asserted that pawl 23 is a member with the configuration recited by claim 1. However, applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that the member "completely orbits the axis of rotation along a circular path in the absence of the sheet medium" and that the member "extends away from the axis of rotation to the distal tip along a nonlinear path." In contrast, pawl 23 travels along an oval path and extends linearly to its distal tip.

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In summary, neither Jensen nor Kitahara, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests every element of independent claim 1. Claim 1 thus should be allowed. Claims 2-6, which depend from claim 1, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

B. Claims 7-10

Independent claim 7, as amended, is directed to a method:

7. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
placing a colorant on a sheet medium;
moving the sheet medium along an upward path after the placing; and
carrying a trailing edge of the sheet medium along an arcuate path
extending upward with a roller defining an axis of rotation and having a
protrusion that includes a radially-extending base and a non-radially extending
tip, the protrusion orbiting the axis of rotation along a circular path as
the roller rotates.

Claim 7 was rejected over a combination of Jensen, Kitahara, and Harvey. However, none of these references, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests every element of amended claim 7. For example, none of the cited references teaches or suggests a roller having a protrusion that orbits the axis of rotation of the roller along a circular path and that "includes a radially-extending base and a non-radially extending tip." In particular, Jensen discloses cylindrical elements 8, Kitahara discloses pawl 23 that travels in an oval orbit, and Harvey discloses a roller with no protrusion at all. Claim 7 thus should be allowed. In addition, claims 8-10, which depend from claim 7, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 7.

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C. Claims 13, 14, 17-20

The present communication amends claim 13 to include all the elements of objected-to dependent claim 16 and intervening dependent claim 15. Accordingly, claim 13 should be allowed for corresponding to objected-to claim 16 rewritten in independent form. Claims 14 and 17-20, which depend from claim 13, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 13.

D. Claims 21-23

Independent claim 21, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for displacing a sheet of print medium:

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for displacing a sheet of print medium from a direction of movement of the print medium produced by a roller, comprising:

a body configured to be connected to the roller for rotation therewith; and
at least one resilient finger connected to the body and configured to be deflected toward the body via bending in a predefined region of the at least one resilient finger, and generally away from the direction of movement, by contact with a face of the print medium to permit movement of the medium along the path and also being configured to engage a trailing edge of the print medium to carry the trailing edge away from the path as the resilient finger rotates,

wherein the at least one resilient finger includes a proximal portion that extends radially from the roller and a distal portion that extends non-radially from the body.

Claim 21 was rejected over a combination of Jensen and Kitahara. However, neither of these references, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests every element of amended claim 21. For example, neither of the cited references teaches or suggests at least one finger "configured to be deflected toward the body via bending in a predefined

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region of the at least one finger." In particular, Jensen discloses cylindrical elements 8 that compress radially and Kitahara discloses pawl 23 that is not disclosed to bend at all during its use. Claim 21 thus should be allowed. In addition, claims 22 and 23, which depend from claim 21, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 21.

E. Claims 24 and 25

Independent claim 24, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for displacing a sheet of print medium:

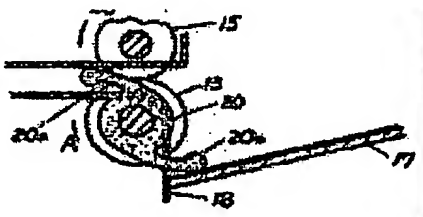
24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for displacing a sheet of print medium from a direction of movement of the print medium produced by a roller, comprising:

a body configured to be connected to the roller for rotation therewith; and
at least one resilient finger connected to the body and configured to be deflected toward the body, and generally away from the direction of movement, by contact with a face of the print medium to permit movement of the medium along the path and also being configured to engage a trailing edge of the print medium to carry the trailing edge away from the path as the resilient finger rotates,

wherein the at least one resilient finger includes a proximal portion disposed adjacent the body, and wherein the proximal portion includes a thinned region at which the at least one resilient finger bends sharply upon contact with the face of the print medium to produce deflection;
the resilient finger configured to vertically lift the print medium.

Claim 24 was rejected over a combination of Harvey and Izumi. However, neither of these references, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests every element of amended claim 24. For example, neither of the cited references teaches or suggests at least one resilient finger with a proximal portion that "includes a thinned region at which the at least one resilient finger bends sharply upon contact with the face of the print medium."

Harvey does not disclose resilient fingers at all; the Examiner referred to member 20 of Izumi in rejecting claim 24. Figure 1C of Izumi is reproduced here to facilitate review.



Member 20 of Izumi does not bend sharply upon contact with the face of the print medium, but instead bends only gently, if at all, as illustrated in the figure above.

In summary, independent claim 24 should be allowed over the cited references. Claim 25, which depends from claim 24, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 24.

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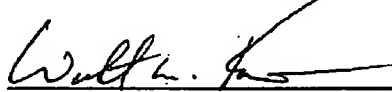
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III. Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

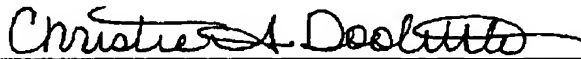
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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner M. Kohner, Group Art Unit 3653, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (571) 273-8300 on January 19, 2007.



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